taken as yet to wind up the schemes. However, a Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) exercise to rationalize/merge/weed out/transfer from Plan to Non-Plan Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes to conserve resources, improve quality of implementation and allocate resources according to Plan priorities is underway in the Planning Commission. Such as exercise is necessary to evaluate development outcomes of schemes and to improve financial management and accountability of public funds, and is generally undertaken at the beginning of any Five Year Plan.

Exemption of excise duty on pesticides

†199. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any effective steps to check increasing inflation in the country which is getting uncontrolled;

(b) whether Consortium of Indian Farmers' Association has submitted a memorandum to Government either exempt or give a rebate thereon the excise duty on pesticides, if so, the decision taken by Government; and

(c) the reasons due to which Government are not ready to exempt excise duty on pesticides on the lines of seeds, agricultural tools, tractor and fertilizers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Measures taken by Government to contain inflation, *inter alia,* include reduction in price of petrol and diesel; exemption/reduction in import duty on a number of commodities like pulses, maize, wheat, edible oils, cement, metals, capital goods, increasing availability of wheat, pulses, etc. through imports by STC, NAFED and banning export of certain essential items such as pulses, skimmed milk powder. The Reserve Bank of India has also taken steps to reduce liquidity.

(b) and (c) Government has received representations seeking exemption or reduction in excise duty on pesticides from 16% to 8%. These representations are under examination. In view of the forthcoming budget, it is not possible to indicate the details at this stage.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.